The Preservation of Antiquities. By Dr. H. J. Plenderleith. Pp. viii+71+2 plates. (London: The Museums Association, 1934.) To members, 2*s.*; to non-members, 2*s.* 6*d.*

THIS little volume is from the authoritative pen of the Assistant Keeper in the British Museum Laboratory. It is, in the first instance, a laboratory manual, containing concise instructions for the cleaning and preservation of a wide range of objects of antiquarian interest—leather and textiles; wood, bone and ivory; siliceous materials such as earthenware, glazes and enamels; and metals, notably copper, bronze and lead. The section on corrosion of metals is particularly fresh and illuminating and, above all, practical.

The book is, however, more than a mere technician's guide. It is easy, reading between the lines, to visualise the blend of scientific acumen, imagination, patience and keen artistic appreciation, which have gone to the formulating of the methods described, all of which are employed in the British Museum Laboratory. The antiquarian and the man of science are, in general, lacking in knowledge of that wide but little-known field where their common interests overlap. Here is a book which will interest both, and also their friend the layman: for though the antiquarian will doubtless be ignorant of the exact rôle played by moist common salt in metallic corrosion and the 'bronze disease', it will probably surprise the scientific worker to hear of the jealous care with which a healthy bronze patina is cherished, and the æsthetic value attaching thereto. The layman also may be less inclined to take for granted the bloom on the majority of our more ancient museum exhibits.

Dr. Plenderleith's book sets a high standard for the companion volumes which will follow it, "dealing with subjects of interest to the museum curator".

P. D. R.

Birth Control To-day: a Practical Handbook for those who want to be their Own Masters in this Vital Matter. By Dr. Marie Stopes. Pp. iv+237+4 plates. (London: John Bale, Sons and Danielsson, Ltd., 1934.) 5*s.* net.

THIS is a practical handbook dealing with methods of birth control, written in simple language so that it can be understood by the ordinary man and woman. Dr. Marie Stopes, for the same reason, writes somewhat dogmatically and gives practical advice based upon a unique experience. After a simple description of the sex-organs and the physiology of reproduction, so as to make clear what it is that has to be controlled, the methods by which pregnancy may be prevented are fully described. These range from domestic makeshift methods to obstructive appliances and chemical spermaticides, the surest of all, according to Dr. Stopes, being an occlusive rubber cap together with a simple grease suppository.

Various questions bearing upon birth control are asked and answered, and a chapter is devoted to birth control clinics. 'Positive' birth control is also referred to—when children are desired, but have failed to materialise. The subject of birth control is of such national, as well as individual, importance that a knowledge of what it aims at, and how it may be effected, should be accessible to all who desire it, and we believe that this book provides that knowledge and deserves to be widely read.

Chemische Unterrichtsversuche: Ausgewählte Beispiele für den Gebrauch an Hochschulen und Höheren Lehranstalten. Von Prof. Dr. H. Rheinboldt. Pp. xx+326. (Dresden und Leipzig: Theodor Steinkopff, 1934.) 10 gold marks.

PROF. RHEINBOLDT'S manual differs from the standard works on lecture experiments in several ways. It includes some experiments on organic chemistry and gives copious references to the literature of ordinary descriptive chemistry. A liking for unusual methods and complicated apparatus is also often apparent. It is difficult to say what purpose is served in a manual for the preparation room by the references which fill up much space, and the deviations from standard practice are sometimes almost grotesque. The usual method of sparking ammonia over mercury in order to show its decomposition is historically sound, since it is the method originally used; the experiment given uses a peculiar eudiometer and confines the gas over di-*n*-butyl phthalate coloured with Celliton Red R I.G.Farbenindustrie A.G. Instead of inverting a jar of hydrogen sulphide over one of sulphur dioxide, the author uses a quite unnecessarily complicated apparatus. Many striking experiments, such as the reaction between chlorine and hydrogen iodide, do not seem to be mentioned.

Although the book has many good points, it does not seem as though it is likely to become popular in England, since it does not appear to fit in with the usual lecture courses in universities, and makes use of apparatus and materials not commonly available in school laboratories.

The Hour of Decision. Part 1: *Germany and World-Historical Evolution.* By Oswald Spengler. Translated from the German for the first time by Charles Francis Atkinson. Pp. xvi+230+xiii. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1934.) 8*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE author of the "Decline of the West" has now found the solution of the world's ills. The economic crisis, unemployment and the political difficulties of the day could be eliminated by the application of cold-blooded "Prussianism", without which the world would indeed be overwhelmed by an uprising of the coloured races. Why "Prussianism"? Because "Germans are still young enough to experience world-historical problems, to form them and solve them; inwardly, while other nations have become too old and rigid to do more than raise defences". Many readers will undoubtedly resent this extraordinary thesis of Spengler's, and point out that the collection of historical facts piled up by him has not necessarily the unilateral interpretation he gives them. But however unconvincing these views, they need careful consideration, especially at a time when some kind of 'intellectual' defence of Hitlerism is becoming fashionable among German thinkers.

T. G.